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AUTHOR Tofler, Ian; DiGeronimo, Theresa Foy
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ABSTRACT

Pressuring gifted children into achieving parents' own unfulfilled longings for glory and success can cheat children of a normal childhood. This commonsense guide for parents of talented and gifted children offers guidance for establishing healthy boundaries between parents' ambitions and the needs of their talented children and provides clear-cut instructions for helping children balance achievement with happiness. The first part of the book takes a historical look at the relationship between parents and children, and distinguishes between healthy encouragement and joy in children's accomplishments and Achievement by Proxy Distortion (ABPD), a psychological state in which the parent's need for the fame, financial benefits, career advancement, or social recognition and respect gained through the child's accomplishments takes precedence over the needs and goals of the child. This part explores the three stages of ABPD (risky sacrifice, objectification, potential abuse), and concludes with seven guidelines that will help all parents separate their own needs, ambitions, and dreams from those of their children. The second part of the book details a seven-step program for encouraging and protecting high-achieving children: (1) evaluate "talent"; (2) evaluate motives in selecting classes, schools, and camps that cater to high-achieving children; (3) beware of abusive instructors; (4) weigh the cost of the sacrifice; (5) look beyond the talent into the future; (6) beware of the red flags of achievement by proxy distortion; and (7) take a good look at parenting style. (Contains 57 references.) (HTH)

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